beautifully written little book.

The second part of the book details many of Guthrie's lectures and writings. Following his wartime experiences, he specialised in ophthalmic surgery and wrote three textbooks on eye surgery. He progressed to become President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England on three separate occasions. He enabled the end of "body snatching" by the Anatomy Act of 1832. This remarkable man was multi-lingual in Spanish, French and Portuguese and was also an outstanding orator. He was offered a Knighthood after the Battle of Waterloo, which he declined, although he did later accept the honour. He died in 1856, age 71 years, from cardiac failure.

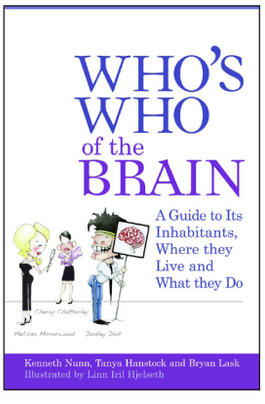
This book will be of interest to many readers. It is beautifully researched and is a wonderful description and commentary of the life of an outstanding surgeon and soldier and his times. The book will be of interest to serious students of medical history, students of military history, and will also be of interest to doctors of all grades and specialties. I would recommend it also as browsing material for undergraduate students.

Surgeons in particular will enjoy reading the case studies in the last one-third of the book, including the survival of the patient who had the successful removal of a darning needle from his heart. In addition to this remarkable man's experience of trauma, he also treated 1084 cases of primary syphilis in the York Hospital at Chelsea. His trial of mercury treatment confirmed that mercury was a dangerous and useless treatment for syphilis!!

This book is a remarkable read. I can recommend it both for serious study and for the reader who wishes to dip in and out of the work of an outstanding soldier and surgeon of the 19th Century.

Professor Roy AJ Spence

Who's Who of the Brain. A Guide to Its Inhabitants, Where They Live and What They Do



Kenneth Nunn, Tanya Hanstock and Bryan Lask. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. May 2008.

Paperback. 272pp. £13.99. ISBN: 978-1-84310-470-4

Did you ever wish you had paid more attention in your neuroanatomy classes at Medical School? Or did you just find the subject too difficult and complicated? Have you now come to regret this, as you realise that, actually, the subject is of real and practical importance in your day to day clinical practice? If so, this book may just be the answer.

'Who's Who of the Brain' is a rather light hearted guide to the anatomy, function and dysfunction of what has been described as the most complex structure in the universe, in fact so complex that it is beyond the ability of the human brain to understand.

The authors discuss in some detail the structures of the brain explaining their connection and their functions. They do this by creating an allegorical district and community which they call 'Cephalton-upon-Ridge'. Within this community of Cephalton-upon-Ridge there live a number of residents. Each of these key characters offers a dramatis personae representing the area of brain in which they reside. The authors describe each of these characters in terms of their place of domicile, their relationship to their neighbours, their appearance and their personality, followed by a more formal explanation of the analogous brain structure.

For example; the inhabitants of Cephalton-upon-ridge reside in one of three residential areas, Uptown, Midtown and Downtown. Among the uptown inhabitants there live such colourful characters as: Dudley Doit, a fitness fanatic. Representing the motor cortex, he is responsible for planning movement, initiating movement and monitoring and maintaining movement. Dudley works in close harmony with Cherry Chatterley (broca's area), who is the main newsreader, and who is responsible for communication and sending information, and also with Maurice Mappley (the parietal lobe) who is a major landholder, mathematician and a lover of maps and all things environmental.

In midtown Cephalton resides Christopher Crosstalk (the corpus callosum) whose property is described as joining Eastern and Western Cephalton and is responsible for communication between both halves of the brain, ...er,sorry,.. town. Corrie O'Graphie (the basal ganglia) is described as a world famous dancer. It is she who is responsible for implementing movement routines, remembering skills and maintaining muscle tone.

In downtown Cephalton resides Frank Finesse (the cerebellum), Fay Faceandear and Sam Swallowtalk (the pons and the medulla). They are responsible for more basic functions such as balance, regulating heart beat, breathing, sleep and waking as well as being responsible for acting as a conduit for messages from the cortex to the body.

Each of the characters portrayed provides a memorable and easy way to understand the characteristics, the functions and the relationships that each part plays in the making of the whole 'community'.

If there is a weakness in the book then it lies within the illustrative case histories that are included and are utilized to illustrate dysfunction of the area under current description. Given the substantial advances in Neurology over recent years with the advent of MRI, functional MRI and PET scanning, which undoubtedly have led to more precise anatomical diagnosis in explaining clinical symptoms and signs, then some of the case histories provided in the book might be considered somewhat weak and even speculative.

Despite the above reservation, I am sure this will prove a popular book among those who have some familiarity, no matter how little, of the brain and its functions, whatever their professional background, and even for those who are an expert in the area. All may well enjoy the conceptualisation of the areas, the connections and functions of this, the most complex of all organs.

Jim Morrow

